

CITY OF SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA  
**COUNCIL POLICY**

CURRENT

SUBJECT: CITY OF SAN DIEGO TELECOMMUNICATION ANTENNA POLICY  
POLICY NO.: 600-43  
EFFECTIVE DATE: May 24, 1999

BACKGROUND

The increase in the number of telecommunication providers and the rapidity of technological advancement has resulted in a significant increase in applications for telecommunication facilities throughout the City of San Diego. The San Diego City Council and community planning groups have expressed concerns regarding potential visual and land use impacts associated with these facilities.

PURPOSE AND INTENT

The purpose of this policy is to establish criteria to assess and reduce visual and land use impacts associated with development of telecommunication facilities, and to ensure that the criteria and guidelines set forth in Council Policy 700-06, ENCROACHMENTS ON CITY PROPERTY, are applied where telecommunication facilities are proposed on City parkland and/or open space.

The intent of this policy is to provide standards necessary for preservation of community character, introduction of quality design and provision of telecommunication systems. All new telecommunication facilities, and additions or modifications to existing telecommunications facilities, shall conform to this policy.

This policy is not intended to apply to development or use of amateur (HAM) radio facilities or temporary telecommunication facilities necessitated by natural or man-made disasters. This policy is also not intended to apply to single dish antennas smaller than 24 inches in diameter, except when associated with another telecommunication facility.

POLICY

A. Administration

The provisions of this policy shall constitute the development requirements for telecommunication facilities in all zones, overlays, planned districts and community plans.

The provisions of this policy shall also constitute the development requirements for telecommunication facilities constructed on lands owned by public agencies within the City of San Diego when the majority of the benefit derived from the use is not directly related to the public agency.

B. Classification

For the purposes of this policy, two classifications of telecommunication facilities, minor and major, have been identified based on physical and locational characteristics. Each classification is

defined by the conditions to which it is subject.

C. Minor Telecommunication Facilities

An application for a *Minor Telecommunication Facility*, for any antenna facility utilized in wireless telephone services, paging systems or similar services, shall be acted upon in accordance with a telephone services, paging systems, or similar services, shall be acted upon in accordance with a Process One decision subject to the following:

1. A Minor Telecommunication Facility shall comply with all development regulations of the underlying zone and overlay(s);
2. A Minor Telecommunication Facility, including associated equipment and structures, shall be concealed from public view or integrated into the architecture or the surrounding environment through architectural enhancement (enhancements that complement the scale, texture, color and style), unique design solutions, or accessory use structures;
3. A Minor Telecommunication Facility shall not result in a reduction in the amount of parking required by the base zone, overlay(s), or existing development permit;
4. A Minor Telecommunication Facility shall not be located on:
  - (a) Legal lots containing:
    - (1) Single-family residential development,
    - (2) Vacant land zoned for single-family residential development,
    - (3) Designated historic resources, or
    - (4) Sites designated or mapped as containing sensitive resources,
  - (b) Portions of legal lots containing leases for billboard(s);
5. In an effort to encourage collocation, and recognize that some telecommunication facilities are minimally visible, the following shall also be defined as Minor Telecommunication Facilities:
  - (a) Collocations on water storage tanks, electric transmission towers, and similarly scaled public utilities /facilities:
  - (b) Additions or modifications to existing Major Telecommunication Facilities when:
    - (1) The area occupied by the antennas (or existing antenna enclosure) increases no more than 100 percent of the originally approved telecommunication facility, and

- (2) The area occupied by an outdoor equipment unit(s) increases no more than 150 square feet of the originally approved facility, and
  - (3) The addition or modification, to the extent possible, is designed to minimize visibility;
- (c) Temporary facilities intended to provide services to City-wide public events, limited to a one-time maximum duration of 90 days, and conditioned with start and removal dates;
- (d) Panel shaped antennas that are:
  - (1) Flush mounted (within 6") to an existing facade on at least one edge, and
  - (2) Extend a maximum of eighteen inches from the facade at any edge, and
  - (3) Do not extend above the height of the building facade, and
  - (4) Are designed to blend with the existing building through the use of color and/or texture; and
- (e) Whip antennas when:
  - (1) The total number of whip antennas visible from the public right-of-way does not exceed six, and
  - (2) The diameter of the whip antenna is four inches or less, and
  - (3) The mounting apparatus is concealed from public view; and
- 6. A Minor Telecommunication Facility shall be removed by the current operator within 90 days of termination of operation, to the satisfaction of the City Manager.

**D. Major Telecommunication Facilities**

An application for a *Major Telecommunication Facility*, for any antenna facility utilized in wireless telephone services, paging systems or similar services, shall be acted upon in accordance with a Process Four decision subject to the following:

- 1. A Major Telecommunication Facility shall be a telecommunication facility that does not conform to the criteria established for a Minor Telecommunication Facility;
- 2. A Major Telecommunication Facility shall utilize the smallest and least visually intrusive antennas and components that meet the requirements of the facility;
- 3. A Major Telecommunication Facility shall be modified through the Substantial Conformity process when technological improvements enable a substantial reduction in visual impacts without reducing the level of service;

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4. A Major Telecommunication Facility shall, to the extent possible, be designed to be minimally visible through the use of architecture, landscape architecture and siting solutions;
5. A Major Telecommunication Facility shall not be located within:
  - (a) Lots containing designated historic resources, or
  - (b) Viewsheds of designated or recommended State Scenic Highways and City Scenic Routes;
  - (c) Dedicated or designated parkland or open space, unless an exception is granted by the City Council.
6. A Major Telecommunication Facility shall not be located within visual proximity of less than one-half mile of another Major Telecommunication Facility, unless the visual impacts are negligible (i.e. architecturally integrating the facility into the environment); and
7. A Major Telecommunication Facility shall be removed by the current operator within 90 days of termination of operation, to the satisfaction of the City Manager.

**HISTORY**

Adopted by Resolution R-288406 03/04/1997  
Amended by Resolution R-291658 05/24/1999